

T-Ball Handbook



**Town of Harpswell
Recreation Department**

Gina L Perow
Recreation Director
PO Box 39
Harpswell, Maine 04079

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Thank You

If you are reading this you are probably one of the volunteers who make the T-Ball Program possible. This important program would not exist without you. Thank you.

This T-Ball Handbook is designed to help you. It will be revised as new ideas and suggestions are made by you and other coaches and volunteers.

All coaches and volunteers in the program are to read this handbook carefully and abide by the contents, including yearly revisions.

Recreation Mission Statement

Mission:

The mission of the Recreation Department and Committee is to provide leisure, educational, arts and sports programs, opportunities, facilities and services that enhance the quality of life for all residents of Harpswell.

This is accomplished, in part by:

- offering programs and opportunities that appeal to a diverse (age, gender, interest, income) population
- encouraging spirit and cohesiveness
- stimulating community involvement
- providing alternatives to loneliness, isolation and self-destructive behaviors
- encouraging fun and reducing stress
- encouraging people to get outside themselves, as participants or providers
- seeing a direct return on town revenue spent on highly visible programs

Goals

T-Ball Goals:

- Create an environment in which children have fun and feel physically and emotionally safe
- Have fun while teaching the basic skills and etiquette of T-Ball
- Empower participants to do their best
- Model and teach good sportsmanship and healthy competitiveness
- Encourage participation and physical fitness
- Place the needs of the participants before adults
- Provide positive and rewarding volunteer opportunities for teenagers and adults

Note: It is very likely that some participants will have difficulty “joining”. Experience shows that letting kids join in on their own time works best. Allow them to have a ball on the sidelines to play alone or with a parent.

Player Goals:

- Have fun
- Practice basic bat handling and ball hitting skills
- Practice good sportsmanship
- Experience the thrill of sport participation

COACH'S CHECKLIST

- ☐ Read this handbook.
- ☐ Meet with Rec. Department staff to get updated list of participants and any late registration forms. **No on-site registrations** are allowed. **Children who are not registered cannot play. NO EXCEPTIONS.** Send anyone who wants to register to the town office and they will be able to participate in the next practice. Registrations can be put in the 24 hour drop box if the town office is closed.
- ☐ Obtain key and padlock code for garage and concession stand.
- ☐ Unlock garage and keep open for duration of practice for bathroom access with rear sliding door locked.
- ☐ For the first practice bring equipment from garage to field for set up.
- ☐ Set up field in manner desired.
- ☐ First practice: Every kid gets a t-shirt. Recruit a parent to pass them out.
- ☐ When practice is over return equipment to concession stand while in season. After the last practice of the season, return equipment to the back of the garage.
- ☐ Turn off all lights.
- ☐ Check bathrooms in garage for extra kids prior to locking.
- ☐ Lock door behind you and check to make sure it is locked.
- ☐ Closing concession stand: turn off lights and lock and pull door hard, then check it (it doesn't latch properly every time).
- ☐ Always carry registration forms with you at every practice. Burn, shred or return forms to Recreation Department at the end of the season. Always keep **confidential**, as there is sensitive information on the forms.
- ☐ Acknowledge sponsor if there is one, to the parents at the first practice.

Contact Information

Name	Work	Home	Cell	Email
Gina Perow	833-5771 ext 103	729-0916	504-6794	harpswellrec2@suscom-maine.net

Please keep the home and cell numbers for yourself. If anyone else needs to reach us, please direct them to the town office phone and email.

These coaching responsibilities are not all-inclusive.

Coaches are expected to use common practices and common sense.

Coaching Duties and Responsibilities

Coaches must know that they have tremendous influence, good or bad, on kids. The emphasis of this program is fun, basic skill development, and good sportsmanship. The coach is expected to provide an atmosphere in which all kids are treated in a fair and equitable manner. The coach must be aware of all safety issues and hazards associated with soccer and devote full effort in providing an atmosphere where participants are physically and emotionally safe.

Coaching Responsibilities:

1. Be a role model at all recreation activities.
2. Make sure all participants have registered. **DO NOT** accept on-site registrations or money. Send anyone who wants to register to the town office.
3. If there are additional supplies or equipment needed, let the Rec. Dept. know ASAP.
4. Organize age and activity appropriate practices and modified games (see lesson plan).
5. Provide appropriately and positively for the psychological, physical and social needs of all participants.
6. Assume responsibility for sportsmanlike conduct and stress the importance of good sportsmanship to the participants.
7. Ensure that all participants are treated fairly and equitably.
8. Take appropriate and immediate action against disrespectful or inappropriate comments, gestures, that invites or encourages inappropriate behavior.
9. Carry copies of the student registration forms at all times so contact can be made with parent or guardian in the event of an accident or emergency.
10. Keep the information on the registration forms private and destroy the forms by shredding or burning them at the end of the season. Failure to do so is in violation of the Freedom of Information Policy for children.
11. Provide for effective supervision prior to, during and after practices and contests so that no child is left unsupervised.
12. Notify the recreation director, within 24 hours of any inappropriate conduct on the part of a participant, spectator, coach or parent.
13. Assist in the preparation and clean up of facilities, before, during and after each use and before and after each season. Participants should have an active and regular role in maintaining spotless facilities. Practice the leave no trace policy
14. Make sure all spectators are aware that using any tobacco product is not allowed and possession of intoxicants and/or illegal substances is prohibited at recreation events and on recreational property.
15. Be advised that prayers are not allowed to be held in connection with recreational activities.
16. These coaching responsibilities are not all-inclusive. Suggestions for revisions and additions are welcome.

Expectations for Parents and Spectators

The mission of T-Ball is to teach and reinforce values relating to wholesome competition, good sportsmanship and fair play. It is expected that parents and spectators reinforce these values by exhibiting appropriate behavior at events.

A condition of participation in recreation events is that all parents and spectators agree to recognize the event as a recreational activity, and that all people in attendance have the responsibility to model appropriate behavior. The event is a unique opportunity for parents and spectators to be a part of a positive and productive environment and to model behavior appropriate to a recreational activity for children.

- **APPLAUD** players for their efforts
- **ACCEPT** the decisions of the coaches
- **APPRECIATE** participants, volunteers and coaches for their commitment
- **SUPPORT** staff and volunteers in conducting an orderly and spirited activity
- **REWARD** sportsmanlike behavior through cheering
- **FOCUS** attention on positive aspects of the child's/children's ability
- **ENCOURAGE** players by showing enthusiasm and positive recognition
- **DEMONSTRATE** concern for the physical and emotional safety and welfare of all

Remember

The participants are children, not professional athletes. They will make skill and judgment errors. However, all participants are trying their best. Negative criticism will not help them improve and are unacceptable forms of expression. Focus attention on the positive aspects of performance. Remember the coaches are dedicated volunteers.

Compliments, Concerns or Complaints

Be open to player and **parent** comments and suggestions. Provide an opportunity and an avenue for them to do this.

SAFETY

PLAYER SAFETY

The coach must be cognizant of safety issues and hazards associated with T-Ball, communicate these concerns to participants, and provide an atmosphere where participants are physically and emotionally safe.

FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT SAFETY

- Each coach is responsible for periodic inspection of equipment and facilities to insure they are safe. Kids are not allowed to climb on fence, picnic tables, etc.
- Each coach is responsible for reporting safety hazards to the appropriate person within 24 hours.

WATER

- All participants should be advised to drink water during practices. Under no circumstance should water be withheld from participants or salt pills or medication administered.

FIRST AID

- Each coach is responsible for reading the registration forms to check for medical concerns and for keeping the information with them and private.
- Each coach is responsible for knowing basic first aid and safety procedures. Coaches without this knowledge should seek assistance in obtaining a basic manual to read or review, they are available at the library.
- First aid kits are located in the garage and concession stand.
- Accidents must be reported within 24 hours to the recreation director.
- Blood spills and blood borne pathogens are a concern. All coaches should know where to find a Bio Hazard Kit at each site to deal with blood spills. Directions contained in the kits must be followed.

CONCESSION STAND

- The concession stand is operated separately from the Recreation Department. If a parent wishes to sell snacks or beverages, please have them contact the Recreation Dept., 833-5771 for direction and contact numbers to the person in charge.

Coaching Hints

- Be the coach you would have wanted to play for.
- Believe in your players.
- Model good sportsmanship. It is a habit, most of which is established in practice.
- Give liberal praise but minimize talking. Kids learn by doing. Comment on a player's actions only when you really have something to say, otherwise they will tune out the constant chatter.
- Don't give false or constant praise. It will be turned out too.
- Judge the effectiveness of your practice by how many times each kid touched the ball, or performed a skill and had fun.
- Inject and encourage fun, humor and laughter.
- Don't use sarcasm it does not feel good, undermines your ability to coach and is not understood at this age level. Don't substitute yelling for constructive coaching.
- Understand that spirit is contagious and success is infectious.
- Practice fairness. Treat kids equally. Every player should receive equal practice time and be expected to share in duties such as picking up equipment, trash etc.
- Don't hesitate to say, "I am sorry", "I am wrong" and "I don't know".
- Never single out an individual player and scold or humiliate them in front of other people. Embarrassment creates contempt and insecurity.
- Provide a sense of security by being consistent and predictable.
- Be prepared to teach your players how to learn and how to accept coaching.
- Realize learning usually comes by making mistakes
- Research shows that an increase in volume of the coach's voice results in decreased comprehension on the part of the child.
- Remember kids may act tough but they are psychologically still kids, even the big ones.
- Remember players do not learn skills or strategies during a game situation.
- Know that for older players understanding the purpose of a drill is just as important as the ability to execute the skill.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Common sense is the best guide.

T-Ball Practice Plan

In T-Ball you will be working with very young children, ages 4-6/7. In this age group, kids most likely will **not** be able to play “baseball”. That is why we start with T-Ball, working on fundamentals and etiquette of the sport. Warm-up, listening skills, catching, throwing and batting pretty much round out what a child of this age is able to take in, retain and not get bored with. Remember, everybody wins.

1. Take attendance.
2. Introduce yourself by name. Tell the kids what you want them to call you. Coach J or Mr. Smith, etc. is okay. Some parents prefer their children not call adults by their first name. Use nametags for children if desired.
3. Do some warm up exercises (5-7 minutes). Do some running around followed by stretching. Let them see this is going to be active and fun, then sit them down again to cover the following:
 - Rules of Order:
When a coach is speaking, what should you be doing?
When the whistle blows, what should you do?
What about swinging the bat or throwing the ball when the coach is talking?
 - Social Rules:
Where should your hands be when the coach is talking to everyone?
What should you say if someone does a good job? What if someone makes a mistake?
How should you react if someone knocks you down or accidentally hits you with the bat or ball?
4. Divide into two teams or two groups. Work on throwing and catching with one group and hitting and running with the other.
5. Keep reminding the kids to NOT throw the bat behind them when they take off for first base.
6. If needed, place 2nd base just behind the pitching mound and move 1st and 3rd base in to make a new smaller diamond.
7. See attached sheets with age appropriate games to play.

Note: Many parents will put pressure on coaches, helpers and kids to play the actual game of baseball. Children of this age do not have the skills, physical or social, to play the actual game. Some modified activities have a game type feel (see attached sheets). It is acceptable during the last 15 minutes of the last 2 sessions to “play games”. Once again, Everyone Wins!

“When the thunder starts to roar, go indoors.”

LIGHTNING AND THUNDER

Procedures for suspending outdoor events because of lightning and/or thunder

- If thunder and/or lightning can be heard or seen, stop the activity and have players and spectators seek protective shelter immediately.
- Inform players that in situations where thunder and/or lightning may or may not be present, but they feel their hair stand on end and skin tingle, immediately assume the following crouched position: drop to their knees, place their hands/arms on their legs, and lower their head. They should not lie flat.
- In the event that either thunder or lightening should occur, allow 30 minutes to pass after the last sound of thunder and/or lightning before resuming play.
 - (1) In case of lightning and/or thunder during an athletic practice, scrimmage, or contest, the activity will be suspended immediately. Players and officials should seek shelter. Spectators will be directed to leave. All coaches are expected to have an alternate plan for seeking shelter and/or expedient departure in case of lightning/thunder or other severe inclement weather.
 - (2) The COACH has the final authority and responsibility to delay or postpone events because of lightning and/or thunder.
 - (3) Parents always have the right to remove their child if they deem the situation dangerous.